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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0558  
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RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 1313  
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 0811  
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU 0348  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 1483  
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0983  
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 2965  
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RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN 1180  
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0801  
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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 6480  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 0076  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0331  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 9694  
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RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFIUU/39CES INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFIUU/BDP INCIRLIK AB TU  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1435  
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ASTANA 0073  
RUEHZN/EST COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 000341

SIPDIS

USAID FOR TROSTLE, BLANCHET AND CARROLL  
HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ  
FAS FOR ITP/MACKE/THOMAS, CMP/DLP/WETZEL, FAS/JDEVER  
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS  
VIENNA PASS APHIS  
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ  
GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE  
ROME FOR US MISSION TO FAO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958:N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [EAID](#) [CASC](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [KPAO](#) [TU](#) [KFLU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY AVIAN INFLUENZA: TURKEY AS MODEL FOR REGION

REF: A. ANKARA 263

[1](#)B. ANKARA 134 AND PREVIOUS

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[1](#)1. SUMMARY: The USG AI Delegation that recently visited Turkey, as well as international organizations on the scene, applaud Turkey's robust and transparent response to recent AI animal and human outbreaks, including good cooperation with international actors. They cite Turkey's response as a regional and global model, particularly as the international effort moves to scientific investigation of the Turkey experience. The World Bank is coordinating international support for increasing surveillance capacity. The GOT and IOs hope for a USG contribution to this support. Ambassador attended an international coordination meeting, aimed to

target next steps. End Summary.

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Situation-Background  
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¶2. Turkey first experienced an avian influenza outbreak in poultry in western Turkey in October that was subsequently declared contained after culling in surrounding commercial operations. Later waves of backyard fowl cases were identified first in eastern Turkey, but spread to many different provinces. In late December, the virus jumped from infected domestic birds to people, eventually infecting 21 cases confirmed by the GOT. Four of these persons died, all children who helped tend rural backyard poultry. Immediately after the outbreak, there were some delays in coordinating a GOT response that was exacerbated by a weeklong religious holiday, but the crisis now appears to be abating. Both human cases and poultry cases are now under control. Over 1.5 million fowl have been culled, and the GOT has implemented an intensive public education program.

¶3. An 11-member, multi-agency USG Delegation traveled to Ankara and eastern Turkey January 16-22 to assess the situation and make recommendations for USG support. The team traveled on to the Caucasus and the Ukraine to assess conditions and to share lessons learned from the Turkey experience.

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International Partner Coordination - WHO, FAO, UNICEF  
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¶4. UNDP ResRep Jakob Simonsen organized a meeting on

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January 27 of AI international actors, including the Ambassador, aimed to determine next steps in Turkey and coordinate assistance. All organization reps emphasized that the GOT's response had been open, quick, efficient, and supportive of field investigation and research. WHO Turkey Rep Luigi Migliorini stressed that the situation in Turkey was calming down -- with no new human cases reported, allowing the WHO teams in Ankara and Van to finish their outbreak investigations. He noted that the WHO DG would travel to Turkey during the week of January 30.

¶5. FAO Turkey Rep Abdellatif Tabet echoed his positive view of Turkey's actions, but noted the initial delay by the GOT in identifying and responding to waves of animal outbreaks; i.e., the GOT did not quickly control transport of people and animals. He tallied 40 confirmed outbreaks in poultry and 80-90 suspected. The FAO rep called for increased capacity in Turkey for early detection and early investigations, including increased laboratory and human capacity. Noting the risk of transmission via bird migration, he raised potential movement of birds to/from Russia and the Red Sea. The FAO has sent a team to the Adana region of Turkey, believing that cold weather in other parts of the country will force migratory birds into marshlands near Adana.

¶6. UNICEF Turkey Edmond McCloughney observed that media saturation during the outbreaks helped the GOT succeed in getting the right messages through to the public, particularly that children were at risk. He said that UNICEF's efforts - working with the MOH - were now focused on more concise, punchy messages, working through Ministries of Education and Interior to filter down to local levels. The UNICEF Rep announced a Feb 6-7 Regional AI communication conference in Geneva to focus on communication lessons from Asia.

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USG Avian Influenza Team  
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¶7. Ambassador explained that the USG AI team had not returned to Ankara for a de-brief, because it had traveled directly on to the Ukraine to continue its mission after the Caucasus (Jan 23-27). He described the team's mission:

- a) Gain first-hand information and assessment
- b) Make specific recommendations for USG support

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- c) Focus on regional approach, using Turkey as a model
- d) Identify lessons for future application - regionally and globally.

¶8. Responding to GOT and IO concerns of likely unreported outbreaks in neighboring countries, Ambassador stressed the importance of regional efforts, building on exporting the Turkey model for response. Asked about U.S. assistance to Turkey, Ambassador said the AI team would make recommendations, but noted that a particularly large effort may not be likely. Instead, Ambassador stated that USG contributions could be best leveraged in the Caucasus where there was a significant USAID mission presence and we could help authorities get ahead of potential outbreaks. He expressed hope that WHO, FAO, and others were in contact with Iran, Syria, and Iraq (the first two raising difficulties for the USG in making contacts).

¶9. The EC Rep announced approval for a fast-track 10 million euro project for Turkey (8.5 million euros out of EU accession funds, rather than Beijing commitments, and 1.5 million euros in counterpart Turkish contributions), which would target animal laboratory upgrades and associated equipment, training, and rapid testing capacity. In describing the recent visit of EC Health Commissioner Kyprianou, the EC rep noted that his message was the need for Turkey and the international community to not let their guard down. The EC Rep stated that a one-week expert mission would remain in Turkey.

¶10. The World Bank Rep described the provisional \$16 million loan package being developed, which is intended to be complemented by the EC grant (and hopefully a USAID and/or other USG grant contribution). The loan/grant package would target human, animal, and communication components, including compensation and laboratory capacity.

¶11. While applauding Turkey's response and openness, IO Reps warn the GOT to expect incremental AI cases in Turkey and adjoining countries. Moreover, there is an expectation that movements of birds in the spring may continue to fan potential spread of the disease in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere.

¶12. In closing, the UNDP ResRep acknowledged the general praise of GOT efforts, but highlighted the lack of an "AI Czar" or centralized focal point in the GOT. Despite creation of a structure under the Prime Ministry, in effect

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there were still parallel crisis coordination centers at the MOH and MOAGR. (The EC Rep corroborated the issue, noting that the EC team was unable to organize a joint press meeting.) The WB Rep pointed out that there was a National Zoonotic Committee for coordinating scientific investigation, with a revolving head. All the IO reps looked forward to illumination of mechanisms for utilization of the mix of loans and grants pledged at Beijing.

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Comment:  
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¶13. While we await the AI team's recommendations, post

believes the U.S. should be responsive in supporting Turkey's AI response capacity, as well as promoting it as a regional model. The GOT has asked for support for increasing and improving surveillance training/capacity, communication, culling incineration, and laboratory capacity. The U.S. could also provide technical assistance in developing Turkey's crisis coordination and response capability.

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